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著者名(英)	Chinatu Takeda
journal or publication title	Otsuma journal of comparative culture
volume	17
page range	71-90
year	2016
URL	http://id.nii.ac.jp/1114/00006332/



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It is difficult to evaluate directly Mme de Staël's vision of constitutional monarchy between 1789 and 1793 today. She wrote very few political articles during this period¹ and a large bulk of her letters have disappeared. The single work of Mme de Staël that dealt substantially with this period was *Considérations sur les principaux événements de la Révolution française* that she wrote between 1813 and 1817 and was published posthumously in 1818. Although the book represented one of the best accounts of contemporaries of the French Revolution, Mme de Staël interpreted historical events with hindsight in order to influence Restoration politics. In this sense, it is doubtful that she was completely honest about the historical description of the French Revolution. This is why this article will not derive her vision of constitutional monarchy between 1789 and 1792 from *Considérations* and instead, focus on what she was *actually* thinking between 1789 and 1793.

This article will try to conjure up Mme de Staël's image of constitutional monarchy between 1789 and 1793. For this purpose, I will extract her ideas in her literary essay entitled *Lettres sur les ouvrages et le caractère de J.-J. Rousseau* (1788) (referred to as *Lettres sur Rousseau* in the rest of this article) and journal articles. In addition, I will evaluate how her contemporary reacted to them in the form of political pamphlets and private letters. I try to combine her ideas with her reputation in public opinion, as direct historical evidence of Mme de Staël's political ideas and activities between 1789 and 1793 is extremely limited.

Mme de Staël in public opinion (1789-January 1791)

Mme de Staël was a principal protagonist of revolutionary politics right from the beginning. Between 1788 and 1790, she devoted her efforts to promoting Necker's political fortune through the medium of her salon.⁶ This is because she was the unique daughter of Necker, who was an influential politician in French revolutionary politics.

Up to July 1789, Necker was a principal adversary of the patriots. In this context, Mme de Staël made a debut as a woman author in December 1788. Her *Lettres sur Rousseau* functioned as a political hagiography of her father in many respects. She underlined the compromising and reformist approach of Necker to the political crisis and praised 'moderation' in opposition to the patriots. What decisively distinguished moderates such as Necker from the patriots was their approach to the notion of sovereignty. Moderates assumed that sovereignty should be checked by

other bodies in order to avoid the concentration of power. They were hostile to the principle of national sovereignty that considered society as one organic body and, therefore, refused to divide sovereignty.⁷

Contrary to the patriots, moderates wanted to reform the old regime and tried to neutralise the absolute sovereignty of the monarch through the creation of a controlling body.⁸ However, once the third Estate declared itself as the nation on June 17 and proclaimed its supremacy over the monarch as the legislative organ, they started to fear the almighty single chamber as a potential source of despotism. Consequently, the restoration of the monarch's prerogative in the legislative chamber and the establishment of the second chamber became major objectives of moderates such as *Monarchiens* such as Mounier, Malouet and Lally-Tollendal after the summer 1789.⁹

As for Necker, it was not until June 23 that he eventually revealed his political plan to the royal council and suggested that the constitution should be drawn up by the Estates and based on a system of two chambers, the first chamber representative of the nation and the second chamber composed of aristocrats. In addition, he emphasised the merit of an independent executive, characterised by the king's supreme command of the armed forces. All the decrees of the assembly to enforce the law were to require his sanction and the public was in the future to be excluded from deliberations.¹⁰

Necker's plan met a strong resistance from counter-revolutionary ministers, the queen and brothers of Louis XVI. The monarch dismissed him on July 11 although the force of public opinion contributed to his triumphal return to Paris on July 14 and his third appointment as finance minister. By then, the power relations between the monarch and the nation had shifted in favour of the latter and Necker decisively took sides with the nation rather than the nobility after July 14.

Necker's political shift led to the modification of policy plans as well. Above all he abandoned the second chamber, judging that it was no longer realistic. He also modified his vision of the royal prerogative and supported a suspensive veto of the monarch instead of an absolute veto, expecting that the monarch would have the right to intervene in the elaboration of the future constitution at least. He assumed that what counted was to preserve the integrity of the monarch's authority during the decisive period to come.¹¹

Necker considered a suspensive veto as an appeal to people on the part of the monarch in order to resolve his conflict with the national assembly. At the same time, he admitted that the final decision lay in the hands of the nation.¹² It meant that despite his compromising view on the royal prerogative, Necker remained unchanged on the view that the monarch occupied a central role in the government.

Mme de Staël fully supported Necker's primary objective after July 14, namely, the restoration of the authority of the monarch vis à vis the national assembly as the following letter of hers indicated: 'il faut que tous les soins de mon père tendent à relever l'autorité du roi. Si le pouvoir

exécutif ne lui appartient pas en entier, si les troupes ne lui obéissent pas, ce pays-ci est perdu... Si cet état durait, la France serait détruite, et sa dissolution serait terrible. Mais j'espère encore, j'espère que mon père la sauvera.'¹³

The vote in the constituent assembly in September 1789 provided Necker's temporary political victory. The constituent assembly rejected the idea of the second chamber in September 1789 and opted for the unicameral legislature. In addition, it voted for a suspensive veto of the monarch that was limited to two consecutive legislative sessions. However, Necker could not preserve the majority in the assembly for long.

The *Triumvirs*, founders of the club of *Jacobins*, with whom Necker politically rallied after July 14, felt betrayed when he delayed the sanction of the decree of August 4.¹⁴ Mirabeau, whose political convictions were close to those of Necker, turned his back on him because of their personal antagonism. Finally, La Fayetteists were sceptical of Necker's strategy, assuming that any royal prerogative was incompatible with the liberty of the nation. Consequently after the autumn 1789, Necker gradually lost support in the constituent assembly and eventually failed in his attempt to avoid the radicalisation of the French Revolution by restoring the royal prerogative.

During the same period, Mme de Staël's *Lettres sur Rousseau* functioned as a hagiography of Necker's policies in the Parisian salon society and provoked lively reactions on the part of a few aristocrats in public opinion.

Among others, an anonymous author published *Remerciements de J.-J. Rousseau à Mme la Baronne de Staël* in April. Qualifying her book 'lettres ravissantes qui font tourner la tête à tout Paris depuis trois mois'¹⁵, the author emphasised: 'Imaginez, Madame, s'il est possible que je puisse jamais assez vous exprimer ma vive profonde reconnaissance.'¹⁶ Although the author cynically remarked that women in the age of Rousseau were not as demanding as Mme de Staël¹⁷, he applauded her sympathy for Rousseau's description of motherhood.¹⁸ What brought him to praise the book, however, was his political sympathy for Necker: 'Oui, madame, mon amour pour les Français me fait admirer Monsieur votre père... Je suis forcé de reconnaître que vous êtes celui de votre siècle et je rends un profond hommage à vos sublimes pensées.'¹⁹

In contrast, two aristocrats refuted Mme de Staël from a diametrically opposed perspective. Isabelle de Charrière, the then mistress of B. Constant, wrote *Plainte et défense de Thérèse Levasseur* and criticised Mme de Staël for suggesting that the adultery of Rousseau's companion and mother of his children provoked his death²⁰: 'Madame la baronne, vous manquez de bonté; car vous dites du mal d'une pauvre femme qui ne vous en a point fait et qui est dans des circonstances moins brillantes que les vôtres. Mon célèbre ami est mort; votre célèbre et respectable père est... plein de vie; vous êtes riche, vous êtes baronne et ambassadrice, et bel esprit; et moi, que suis-je? Vous manquez aussi de justice; car vous avancez des faits qu'il vous est impossible de prouver.'²¹

Another of Mme de Staël's detractors was the marquis of Champcenez. He was a habitué of Parisian salon society and well-known for his sense of irony and sarcasm. Along with Rivarol, he was adamantly opposed to the Revolution and edited the counter-revolutionary *Actes des Apôtres*. He had already presented a cynical portrait of Mme de Staël in *Petit traité de l'amour des femmes pour les sots* in 1789²²: 'On incrustat même dans sa tête quelques mots techniques des sciences abstraites, afin que quelques expressions échappées sans approfondissement la fissent un jour passer pour savante dans la société. La conjuration paternelle réussit....'²³

In *Réponse aux lettres sur le caractère et les ouvrages de J.-J. Rousseau, Bagatelle que vingt libraires ont refusé de faire imprimer*, the marquise of Champcenez directly refuted Mme de Staël. His main argument was that it was impossible to break down the dichotomy between emotion and reason, on the one hand and nature and society on the other, or to reconcile the *philosophes* and Rousseau. As a counter-revolutionary, he denigrated Rousseau: 'il (Rousseau) n'a cherché qu'à y combattre les nôtres.'²⁴ 'il lui fallait toute la sensibilité de ce cœur, pour que les lumières de son esprit ne le convertissent pas tout à fait.'²⁵

From a political perspective, it implied that he was adamantly opposed to Necker's compromise with the nation and inserted harsh criticism of Necker in his pamphlet that was principally devoted to the literary criticism of *Lettres sur Rousseau*: 'ce grand homme d'état...va donc bâtir une colonne inébranlable sur les fondations fragiles de ses prédécesseurs! En ce cas je souhaite qu'il le laisse aider par les architectes de la nation, qui connaissent mieux le terrain que ceux de Genève, et qui ne travaillent point pour une gloire exclusive.'²⁶

As early as 1789, Mme de Staël already showed a measure of independence from Necker. Mme de Charrière noted the rumour according to which 'Mme de Staël s'est rendue si assidue à l'assemblée nationale, y a fait tant de bruit, de gestes, de mines, a tant écrit de billets aux membres de l'assemblée, approuvant, conseillant, etc...que monsieur son père lui a dit d'opérer entre cette salle et sa maison, ne voulant plus qu'elle retournât à l'une si elle voulait revenir dans l'autre.'²⁷

In August 1790 when Necker's political prestige largely declined, Mme de Staël published an article entitled 'l'Eloge de Guibert' in *Correspondance littéraire* of Grimm and continued her support of him.²⁸ At the same time, in opposition to Necker and his friends, she affirmed that the right to declare war and peace belonged to the nation and approved the national sovereignty.²⁹

In September 1790, Necker eventually resigned from office and Mme de Staël accompanied him in his retreat in Coppet. In Paris, a friend of the marquis of Champcenez and an active counter-revolutionary writer himself, Rivarol dedicated the preface to his *Petit dictionnaire des grands hommes de la révolution* to Madame de Staël because it constituted 'the list of her admirers', the majority of whom were members of the constituent assembly.³⁰ He emphasised the political influence of her salon by suggesting ironically that 'vous avez éprouvé leur patriotisme par vos

discours, vous l'avez fortifié par vos faveurs; enfin, vous avez formé des hommes au-dessus de tous les événements.'³¹ Finally, he called Mme de Staël 'fille du plus grand ministre de l'année passée,...fille du plus profond génie de l'année passée,...fille enfin, qu'on peut regarder comme le seul débris de la gloire de son père'³² and underlined that contrary to Necker, Mme de Staël still preserved political influence over French deputies.

Thus on the whole, it is safe to say that in public opinion Mme de Staël was recognised as Necker's political ally up to September 1790.

A silent majority and centrism (1791-summer 1792)

Yet, the reality was different. During her retreat in Coppet, Mme de Staël started to be disengaged from her father's political influence. Contrary to her father, she supported the sales of *les biens nationaux* and advised her husband to take advantage of the opportunity in numerous letters during the autumn of 1790.³³ In addition, she wrote: 'si j'ai eu un tort dans les derniers temps de mon séjour à Paris, c'est de me montrer trop aristocrate. Mon humeur contre l'assemblée m'y entraînait sans cesse. Si j'ai fait une action marquée, c'est de cesser de voir MM. de Lameth: c'est encore une conduite dans le sens de la cour.'³⁴ Eventually, Mme de Staël returned to Paris alone in January 1791. Immediately after her return, the aunts of the king who were accompanied by Narbonne were arrested by a French municipality on their way to Rome. Their motive for fleeing France was to obtain freedom of faith away from the civil constitution of the clergy. The assembly devoted an entire session to discussion of the issue on February 24. Immediately after, a political pamphlet entitled *Les Intrigues de madame de Staël à l'occasion du départ de Mesdames de France* widely circulated in Paris.

Although the veracity of the story was far from certain, it is worthwhile paying attention to this work to understand how Mme de Staël was perceived by the anonymous writer of the pamphlet who was a constitutional monarchist. The theatrical scenario took place in Mme de Staël's salon before the session in the assembly where representative deputies got together to discuss how to liberate the princesses before the session in the assembly. It depicted Mme de Staël as the queen of the constituent assembly and emphasised her bad humours against the departure of the princesses and Narbonne, her lover. Despite her political influence over deputies, however, the text also demonstrated that events eventually escaped Mme de Staël's political control when Mirabeau influenced the monarch to issue a decree to liberate them. This political pamphlet suggests that by the beginning of 1791, contemporaries perceived Mme de Staël as a full-fledged revolutionary without any association with Necker.

Mme de Staël published an anonymous article entitled 'A quel signe peut-on reconnaître quelle est l'opinion de la majorité de la nation?' in *Indépendants* in April, 1791. *Indépendants*

was published in March 1791 and lasted for two months. Suard, a sympathiser and close friend of Necker, anglophile journalist and eminent translator of English political and philosophical texts founded the magazine.³⁵ Although his political views were more moderate than those of Mme de Staël, they were linked by a life-long friendship and common enthusiasm for England. This explains why Suard was one of the most sympathetic journalists to Mme de Staël throughout the revolutionary period.

The theme of this article was the restoration of the royal prerogative that had been Necker's principal policy after July 14. Mme de Staël suggested that the great sense of regret expressed by public opinion on the occasion of Mirabeau's death reflected that the silent majority also endorsed Mirabeau. This is because 'il croyait que l'existence d'un roi armée par la constitution d'une force suffisante pour faire exécuter les lois, était nécessaire à la France, et qui, depuis quelque temps, paraissait vouloir se vouer à la défense de cette vérité.'³⁶

After this acknowledgement, Mme de Staël affirmed that Mirabeau's policies would be sustained by the young generation of constitutional monarchists.³⁷ However, the problem for those in favour of the restoration of the royal prerogative derived from the fact that they were numerically weak in the assembly. This is why she invited moderate republicans to support constitutional monarchists with a view to restoring royal prerogative. She perceived that this political alliance was meant to protect property interests, the common interests of both parties in the face of rising Jacobins.

In order to convince moderate republicans of her point of view, Mme de Staël proceeded as follows: first, she categorically denied the possibility of the Republic in France and suggested: 'il n'y a de république possible, dans un grand état, que la république fédérative, et l'unité de l'empire ne peut exister qu'avec un roi.'³⁸ If the monarchy already existed, the establishment of an entirely new regime would forcibly destroy the pre-existing society, which went against the interests of a silent majority. She thought: 'la majorité de la nation veut et voudra toujours l'égalité, et la liberté; mais qu'elle désire l'ordre et croit que, pour le maintenir, l'autorité légale et la force légitime d'un monarque sont nécessaires.'³⁹

Secondly, she invited moderate republicans to consider monarchy as a rational principle rather than a blind religious faith: 'le temps où l'on faisait une religion de la royauté n'est-il pas passée sans retour? Ne sommes-nous pas arrivés à la considérer comme une idée politique dont il faut peser les avantages et les inconvénients, comme de toute autre institution sociale?'⁴⁰ This position implied that she did not exclude the possibility of the Republic were historical circumstances to change.

Finally, in this article, Mme de Staël repeatedly used words such as the majority of the nation, the propertied class and public opinion. Mme de Staël emphasised that only a literate, wealthy

and well-educated class of society composed the nation. She assumed that this class coincided with the propertied class and influenced public opinion. Later on, she wrote that although they did not intervene in public opinion directly, their tacit wishes mattered to the point where they would eventually dictate political decisions.⁴¹ In other words, she posited the existence of an intermediary class as the ultimate sovereign of the legislative, and that moderate republicans who were originally a small political faction from the southwest of France could not go against it.

While these concepts were distinct from the old regime vision of society founded on the bipolar view between nobility and people, they also went against the prevailing vision in the constituent assembly, according to which revolutionary France made all masculine citizens free and equal before the sovereign nation. Although these vocabularies were ambiguous and indefinable, they, at least, indicate that Mme de Staël proposed the necessity of forming a new intermediary class founded on property interests in post-revolutionary society as a pragmatic means to avoid despotism.

Her effort to ally moderate republicans to constitutional monarchy was manifest in ‘Le simple extrait du livre de M. Necker sur son administration’, as well. This anonymous political pamphlet was published prior to the publication of Necker’s self-justification, *Sur l’administration de Necker par lui-même* in May 1790.⁴² Despite the title, it was above all a political statement by Mme de Staël regarding the political circumstances of the spring 1791. Mme Staël exaggerated democratic aspects of Necker’s administration to rally moderate republicans to constitutional monarchists.⁴³

From this perspective, Mme de Staël affirmed that Necker provoked the French Revolution: first, ‘M. Necker a convoqué les états généraux, étant le seul homme qui, par son crédit et ses talents en finances, pût se passer de leurs secours.’; second, ‘M. Necker a voulu le doublement du tiers; il s’est seul chargé de cette grande responsabilité vis à vis de la cour et des puissants d’alors; et sans le doublement du tiers, il n’y avait pas de révolution.’; finally, ‘en le déterminant à venir, le 5 février, jurer la constitution au milieu de l’assemblée, il a décidé cette union du roi avec elle, que les aristocrates ne pardonneront jamais...’⁴⁴

Mme de Staël’s call to rally moderate republicans to the side of constitutional monarchists echoed the general political aspiration of moderates in the spring of 1791. While *émigrés* threatened to restore the old regime by means of foreign troops, dissatisfaction with the restrictive policies of the constituent assembly had given rise among a large number of passive citizens to a proliferation of radical revolutionary clubs demanding more egalitarian reforms.

In the bipolar nature of revolutionary politics, the primary concern of *la Fayette*ists and the *Triumvirs* shifted away from the guarantee of natural rights in the spring of 1789 towards the guarantee of property. Their change in awareness influenced a series of laws to repress social movements between April and September 1791. They included items such as toleration of the

practice of refractory catholicism, return of *émigrés*, restriction of the freedom of press, right of petition, and freedom of coalition and reunion and the Chapelier law.

The flight of the monarch in June fatally damaged the credibility of the monarch to the point that La Rochefoucault, Dupont de Nemours, Achille du Chatelet and la Fayette considered the possibility of the Republic.⁴⁵ Mme de Staël confessed in retrospect that the Republic should have been established after the Varennes incident.⁴⁶ For them, the Republic represented an aristocratic oligarchy inspired by the American constitution and the second chamber of an English type. This is why the idea of the Republic did not appeal to democrats such as Robespierre who were more preoccupied with democratic policies than political etiquettes.⁴⁷

Nonetheless, the *Triumvirs* who were the closest to the royal family and replaced Mirabeau as the link between the royal government and the assembly after the spring of 1791 preferred the conservation of the monarchy. They also came to terms with the view that the executive should be independent of the legislative and that the monarch was co-legislator.⁴⁸ Consequently, partisans of the *Triumvirs* and *la Fayette* jointly founded the club of *Feuillants* during the summer of 1791. *Feuillants* were composed of constituent deputies, aristocrats or bourgeois propertied class in opposition to the radicalised club of *Jacobins* that was originally founded by the *Triumvirs*.

On Barnave's initiative, the question of the executive became a major object of deliberations in the assembly in the summer of 1791. The *Triumvirs* proposed two reforms pertaining to the royal prerogative. Firstly, they underlined that the monarch was a representative of the nation in the legislative even if he kept his function in the executive. This was Necker's idea after July 14. In addition they conceded the right of initiating law limited to the opening of each session to the monarch, although it did not compel the assembly to defer to the royal will.⁴⁹ This was important progress in reflections on the royal prerogative that neither Necker nor *Monarchiens* dared propose.

Secondly, Barnave emphasised the necessity of reinforcing an organic link between the executive and the legislative through ministers. They should be permitted to assist deliberations in the assembly and given the chance to respond to interpellations of the assembly on the conduct of the government. This way, the opposition would attack the political conduct of ministers without questioning the legitimacy of the monarch's political authority.⁵⁰

The *Triumvirs'* last attempt to strengthen the royal prerogative failed. On September 14, 1791, the monarch sanctioned the constitution of 1791 that approved a unicameral assembly over which the king had a suspensive veto but no power of dissolution. Here was, therefore, the first constitution of revolutionary France that sanctioned the submissive status of the citizen-monarch vis à vis the legislative, the principle that was consistent with the sovereign nation proclaimed by the national assembly on June 17.⁵¹

Narbonne's ministry (summer of 1791-September 1792)

On September 16, Mme de Staël presented her view of the constitution of 1791:

‘je crois...que cette révolution est bien plus dirigée contre la noblesse que contre la royauté. Dans le combat de l’aristocratie contre la démocratie, la monarchie peut très facilement tirer son épingle du jeu, et si cela arrive, la destruction des corps intermédiaires servira la puissance royale: en Turquie, il n’y a pas plus de noblesse qu’en France. C’est sous ce point de vue....que je trouve la constitution de France détestable. Elle n’établit aucun équilibre. Si le roi a la majorité dans la seule chambre qui existe, il peut tout; s’il ne l’a pas, il ne peut rien. Que la constitution d’Angleterre est plus habilement combinée!’⁵²

This passage indicates Mme de Staël’s ambiguous opinion of the constitution of 1791. On the one hand, she assumed that the French Revolution was conducted against nobility and not the monarch, which reveals that she believed that the constitutional monarchy would survive with the constitution of 1791. On the other hand, she thought that a lack of an intermediary body between the single chamber and the monarch would make revolutionary France comparable to a despotic country such as Turkey because of the concentration of state sovereignty.

Mentioning England, Mme de Staël referred to Montesquieu’s principle of checks and balances as he described it in *De l’Esprit des lois*; ‘pour qu’on ne puisse abuser du pouvoir, il faut que, par la disposition des choses, le pouvoir arrête le pouvoir.’⁵³ She implied that what was detrimental to liberty in the constitution of 1791 was the absence of any intermediary device between the legislative and the executive that would help preserve the whole political institution together, the idea previously supported by Necker and the *Triumvirs*.⁵⁴

The legislative assembly opened on October 1, 1791. The decree that had prohibited the re-election of constituent deputies in the legislative assembly brought new faces to the political scene. This decree represented the most significant contribution of Robespierre towards the radicalisation of the French Revolution. While *Girondins* became a majority in the legislative assembly, leaders of the constitutional monarchists lost their seats and had to control their members from outside. This meant that the coalition between moderate republicans and constitutional monarchists was vital to the very survival of constitutional monarchy.

Counter-revolutionaries and *Jacobins* were united in their common dissatisfaction with the constitution of 1791. The monarch’s own behaviour contributed to further social disintegration. He publicly approved the constitution while keeping in touch with *émigrés* and reactionary sovereigns behind the scenes. He had asked the latter to intervene in French internal affairs, which provoked the declaration of Pillnitz in August 1791.⁵⁵

The *Brissotins* led the initiative to exaggerate the alarming nature of the declaration of Pillnitz and initiated an intensive pro-war campaign both in the assembly and in public opinion during the

last months of 1791.⁵⁶ From November, some moderate newspapers pressed for war though the leaders of the two parties and they started to meet in the salon of Mme de Staël.⁵⁷ The political coalition of centrists, as Mme de Staël had suggested several months before, was therefore, crystallised around the question of the war.

Girondins such as Verginiaud, Ducos, Guadet, Gensonné, Brissot and Condorcet supported the war for two reasons: first, to defend the economic validity of *assignats* by attacking *émigrés* and to preserve the material interests of the middle class; second, to accelerate the Revolution and to combat moderate elements.⁵⁸ Constitutional monarchists including Talleyrand, Biron, Choiseul, Montmorency, Narbonne, La Fayette and Mme de Staël assumed that a war of a limited scale would be an effective means of reinforcing the royal prerogative and destroying their political enemies inside and outside France.⁵⁹ In contrast, the *Triumvirs* were opposed to any kind of war, preferring peaceful constitutional reforms to resolve the nation's political crisis. Jacobin leaders such as Robespierre were opposed to the war as well, fearing that it might result in the solidification of constitutional monarchy.

In this context, Mme de Staël's political influence accelerated when Narbonne, Mme de Staël's lover and commander of the National Guard in Paris, was nominated to be minister of war between December 6 and March 9. The following letter of Barnave to Marie-Antoinette suggests that by then, Mme de Staël's salon represented an influential political group that had to be treated tactfully by the royal government: 'cette affaire de M.de Narbonne a été conduite avec une étourderie qui ne peut s'expliquer que par le caractère de la personne qui a le plus d'empire sur lui.'⁶⁰

Madame de Staël's main objective in Narbonne's ministry was to implement main features of the parliamentary system including the distinction between the political and penal responsibility of ministers and the formation of a homogeneous cabinet of ministers.⁶¹ The cabinet of ministers to which Narbonne belonged was politically divided into counter-revolutionary, *Feuillants* and *la Fayetteists*. In particular, the influence of counter-revolutionary ministers on the monarch made the government less credible.

The memorandum of Narbonne on February 24, a large portion of which was presumably drafted by Mme de Staël, reflected these concerns. It advised Louis XVI to eliminate counter-revolutionaries from his court, place his priority on the propertied class and conform to the constitution of 1791.⁶² He reiterated the political aspirations of the wealthy propertied class: 'la forme du gouvernement leur est assez indifférente, ce qu'ils veulent, c'est la conservation de ce qu'ils possèdent. Ils se rallieront à ceux qui la leur garantiront '⁶³, ideas expressed already by Mme de Staël in 1790. In late February, Narbonne directly asked Marie-Antoinette to nominate him prime minister, in order to head the cabinet of 'Revolutionary' ministers, although the latter scornfully rejected his proposal.⁶⁴

What Narbonne intended as prime minister was expressed in an article entitled 'Observations sur le ministère anglais' in the *Gazette universelle* published on March 9, the day of Narbonne's dismissal. The comte de Vaublanc attributed its authorship to Mme de Staël.⁶⁵ It wrote: 'le roi d'Angleterre n'est que l'électeur héréditaire et unique du corps dépositaire du pouvoir exécutif, c'est-à-dire du ministère. Il ne règne en effet par lui-même qu'au moment où il choisit les ministres. Ceux-ci étant seuls chargés de la responsabilité du gouvernement.....Ce sont donc les ministres qui règnent en Angleterre. Mais le pouvoir exécutif n'est énergique entre leurs mains que parce qu'ils forment un corps parfaitement uni qui délibère en commun, qui suit toujours l'avis de la majorité, et dont aucun membre, aucun subordonné, n'agit en sens contraire.'⁶⁶

In England, the accumulation of the functions of ministers and deputies allowed the former to operate as an organic bridge between the executive and the legislative. The distinction between the political and penal responsibility of ministers before parliament was another central feature of the parliamentary regime in England. The transfer of the monarch's power to ministers was conducted, on a juridical front, through the technique of ministerial countersignatures that authenticated the royal signature.⁶⁷ It meant that ministers were collectively, and no longer individually responsible before the assembly. It obliged ministers to report and justify their political conduct in front of deputies, as well as to resign when the assembly decided to censure their action.⁶⁸ At the same time, the system defended the monarch from political hazards, and in practice exempted him from using the right of veto.

Although French intellectuals were aware of the benefits of the English parliamentary system, its supporters radically decreased after the war of independence in America.⁶⁹ Even *Monarchiens* such as Mounier and Lally-Tollendal considered that the refusal of the national assembly to trust a minister as a means to sack him was detrimental to the integrity of the monarch whereas the patriots assumed it went against the liberty of the nation.⁷⁰

During Narbonne's ministry, contemporaries witnessed that Mme de Staël intensified her efforts to create a party of the majority in the legislative assembly to facilitate the implementation of Narbonne's policies. She considered her salon as a meeting place between *Girondins* and constitutional monarchists. The comte de Mercy reported: 'en vue de servir son ami, Mme de Staël a voulu lui acheter un parti et lui en a formé un, composé de l'évêque d'Autun, du Genevois Clavière, de M.de Condorcet, de l'abbé Sieyès, de Brissot et d'Isnard. On cherche à y attirer Danton....'⁷¹ Some historians emphasised that Mme de Staël was the author of a political pact between Narbonne and Condorcet.⁷²

Mme Condorcet, who was a personal friend of Narbonne, collaborated with Mme de Staël to retain Narbonne in power. The political collaboration between two *salonnières* was surprising to contemporaries. Lacretelle wrote: 'Narbonne ne négligeait rien pour plaire à Mme de Condorcet...

Mmes de Staël et de Condorcet parurent conspirer, dans une parfaite et singulière intelligence, pour les succès de M.de Narbonne.⁷³

Consequently, the intense salon politics bore fruit and impinged on the political collaboration between *Girondins* and constitutional monarchists for a short period. In the legislative assembly, *Girondins* supported the demands of Narbonne when he claimed exceptional powers to reinforce the ground army on December 14. Left-wing magazines approved the nomination of La Fayette to the command of the army although they were otherwise very critical of him. *Patriote français* of Brissot wrote on December 25 1791: 'la fortune met dans les mains du général une occasion d'expier le mal qu'il a fait à la cause du peuple. Puisse-t-il en profiter...'⁷⁴

Until his resignation, some *Girondins* defended Narbonne. Hérault de Séchelles who moved from the *Feuillants* over to the *Girondins* and frequented Mme de Staël's salon at this period verbally attacked Bertrand de Molleville, the adversary minister of Narbonne in the assembly on March 5. The next day, another habitué of her salon, Guadet clearly posed the question: 'les ministres veulent-ils faire de Louis XVI le roi des français ou le roi de Coblençe?'⁷⁵

From what has been discussed, Mme de Staël's political ambition between the summer 1791 and the spring 1792 can be summarised as follows: a successful military campaign against reactionary foreign powers politically allied with *émigrés* would prevent counter-revolution, whilst a central government strengthened by its control of the war could effectively contain the Jacobins' internal offensive. Ultimately, a reinforced executive might be transformed into an English style ministry that would make policy subject to legislative approval. Through the introduction of ministers' political responsibility before the assembly, the monarch's authority and prestige would be reinforced.

Unfortunately, Narbonne's ministry and his partisans in the assembly could not implement her political plans. The resignation of Narbonne as a result of his open confrontation with counter-revolutionary ministers paved the way for the ascendancy of the *Brissotins* and destroyed moderates' hopes of preventing the radicalisation of the French Revolution. In a political context that anticipated an open military confrontation between patriots and counter-revolutionaries, Mme de Staël retreated from the political scene.

In contrast, the *Triumvirs* intensified their campaign to reform the constitution of 1791 and to save constitutional monarchy by appealing to public opinion. They proposed reactionary plans like the establishment of the second chamber, an appeal to the royal dictatorship, destruction of Jacobins and adjournment of the assembly to stop the left-wing drift of the single chamber, measures that were to be suggested by conservative Republicans of the Directory.⁷⁶

Ultimately, the royal government was destroyed, paving the way for the Republic on August 10. Mme de Staël stayed in Paris until the massacre of September. She devoted her efforts to

arrange the escape of her political friends, including, Narbonne, Montmorency, Lally-Tollendal and Jaucourt from the safe house of her official residence, the Swedish embassy in Paris. She eventually left Paris for Switzerland in early September

Mme de Staël's exile to England (January-September 1793)

Mme de Staël left Switzerland for England where a colony of constitutional monarchists were exiled in January 1793 shortly before the outbreak of war between England and France. They included Narbonne, Talleyrand, Montmorency, Jaucourt and de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt. Ousted from France, they were rejected by the group of aristocratic *émigrés* who surrounded the princes in England. They stayed together in Juniper's house in Surrey thanks to Mme de Staël's financial assistance.⁷⁷

After the execution of Louis XVI, Mme de Staël wrote *Réflexions sur le procès de la reine* in England. She stressed how the queen provoked the French Revolution by exercising her influence to dismiss Calonne and to nominate the archevêque de Sens: 'ce ministère de l'archevêque de Sens, cause immédiate de la révolution, peut-être blâmé par les partisans du système aristocratique; mais assurément les démocrates doivent l'approuver; c'est par cette administration que le germe de tous leurs principes a été développé....les états généraux furent promis, tous les Français invités à publier leurs avis sur le mode de convocation; enfin les observateurs de ce temps crurent deviner que l'archevêque de Sens voulait une révolution en France, et depuis, il y a donné son assentiment le plus authentique.'⁷⁸

Mme de Staël's view that the French Revolution was led by the political alliance of the monarch and the people against nobility portrayed the queen on the side of the nation: 'quand le seul ministre qu'elle ait fait nommer s'est montré démocrate, quand la seule époque dans laquelle elle ait pris quelque part aux affaires, est celle où les principes de la révolution ont commencé à être admis, comment peut-on l'accuser d'être ennemie de la liberté ? Comment peut-on lui trouver des crimes?'⁷⁹ At the same time, by suggesting that the queen was the hidden author of the French Revolution, Mme de Staël tried to disengage Necker from any political responsibility for the Terror.

In this pamphlet was expressed her anticipation of the future of revolutionary France as well. It seems that Mme de Staël was alarmed more by the possibility of the counter-revolution than by the survival of the Republic. After having praised the motherly quality of the queen, she referred to the political stake intrinsic in the survival of the queen as a mother: 'les Français qui versèrent des pleurs sur le destin du roi ont consacré à la reine l'affection déchirante qu'ils ressentaient pour son époux; si la reine périssait à son tour, si le jeune enfant, héritier de tant d'infortunes, mourait privé des soins de sa touchante mère, on s'attacherait aux restes de cette race royale persécutée, et les princes qu'on repousse aujourd'hui intéresseraient en leur faveur, quand il n'existerait plus qu'eux ?'⁸⁰

Mme de Staël emphasised that it would be shameful for the French to execute the queen as she was without defence.⁸¹ She appealed to Republican virtue and addressed her plea to *Républicaines*, in particular: ‘c’en est fait de votre empire si la férocité règne, c’en est fait de votre destinée si vos pleurs coulent en vain. Défendez la reine par toutes les armes de la nature; allez chercher cet enfant qui périra s’il faut qu’il perde celle qui l’a tant aimé; il sera bientôt aussi lui-même un objet importun, par l’inexprimable intérêt que tant de malheurs feront retomber sur sa tête; mais qu’il demande à genoux la grâce de sa mère; l’enfance peut prier, l’enfance s’ignore encore.’⁸²

At the same time, considering the political stake of Louis XVII in the future of the monarchy, such an emphasis on the motherhood of the queen implied a pro-monarchical position, as well. She implicitly suggested that the loss of the mother would be detrimental to the survival of Louis XVII and ultimately increase the chance of the counter-revolution.

When this pamphlet was published anonymously in Paris and London, everybody knew its author was Mme de Staël.⁸³ A circle of constitutional monarchists in London considered this pamphlet a political plea to influence Pitt in favour of the cause of constitutional monarchy and to dissociate him from French counter-revolutionaries. For this purpose, Talleyrand prepared the publication of the pamphlet in London.

Talleyrand’s letters to Mme de Staël between September and November 1793 reveal that constitutional monarchists had already started to discuss the possibility of restoration. He endeavoured to reconvene the constituent assembly of 1789 in Toulon under the protection of the coalition powers and restore monarchy. On September 28, ‘mon vœu serait que les districts des départements méridionaux qui ont déjà fait connaître leur attachement à cette constitution de 89 rappelaient à Toulon ou ailleurs les députés de l’assemblée constituante. On aurait une assemblée, et c’est l’essentiel : car il n’y a qu’une assemblée qui puisse avoir longtemps une popularité assez forte pour aller en avant.’⁸⁴ ‘Nous formerons tout de suite notre petit pouvoir exécutif: Narbonne, Sainte-Croix. Pour avoir une armée et pour nos relations avec les puissances, nous n’aurons besoin que de cela. Notre intérieur n’est pas assez grand encore pour mériter un ministre.’⁸⁵

On October 30, ‘ce que je désirais extrêmement, ce serait qu’il fût fait par quelques districts du midi la demande d’une assemblée et dans l’impossibilité d’en avoir une nouvelle, le retour de l’assemblée constituante. C’est là ce que je vous demande de votre côté de faire parvenir dans le midi par les moyens que vous pouvez avoir à votre disposition. Il m’est démontré que c’est là l’intérêt bien entendu des gouvernements en guerre avec la France autant que la nôtre...Lorsqu’une fois cette assemblée sera formée, il faudra que M. de Staël se fasse envoyer vers cette assemblée et qu’elle soit reconnue par les puissances comme la seule assemblée légitime, de là, l’ordre, de la paix.’⁸⁶ ‘Je n’ai parlé de ce projet qu’avec Narbonne et Sainte-Croix. Tous les deux sont de mon avis absolument.... Nous aurons besoin d’un Bourbon comme chef du conseil exécutif. Nous le

trouverions à Marseille où est M. le prince de Conti, qui peut être lieutenant général du royaume.’ ‘Si les choses se passent ainsi, les Anglais auront la gloire d’avoir pacifié l’Europe, remis l’ordre en France, et ils auront fait une guerre utile pour eux, car il est impossible que le pouvoir quelconque qui gouvernera la France ne leur donne pas de dédommagements convenables pour les dépenses de la guerre dans laquelle les insensés Français les ont entraînés.’⁸⁷

Talleyrand judged that his project was futile when the English naval troops were defeated by the French army in Toulon. On November 1: ‘sur l’affaire de Toulon comme sur tout ce qui se passe dans ma tête et dans mon cœur,depuis plus de quinze jours, je n’y pense plus. Il y avait là un moyen: il n’existe plus. Vous me dites : M. de S. a bien d’autres projets, bien meilleurs pour nous. Expliquez-moi cette phrase.’⁸⁸ On November 8, ‘C’est une maison finie pour la France que la maison de Bourbon. Voilà de quoi penser. J’en suis absolument à vos idées sur notre situation actuelle. Plusieurs années à ne pas faire autre chose que vivre. S’il y avait une contre-révolution dans notre sens, s’en mêler, s’il y en a quelqu’autre, attendre.’⁸⁹

Conclusion

Mme de Staël was a constitutional monarchist between 1789 and 1793. She was a *la Fayette*ist although her salon received the *Triumvirs* and *Brissotins* as well. She supported the notion of the king in the nation (republican monarchy) and judged that the constitution of 1791 characterised by the almighty single chamber and a suspensive veto of the monarch was functional. After the legislative assembly was established in October 1791, she was keen on the preservation of the constitution of 1791 in opposition to those who called for constitutional reform, such as the *Triumvirs*.

Mme de Staël’s political influence was most active during the last year of constitutional monarchy. She obtained the nomination of Narbonne to be minister of war in December 1791. Together with him, she tried to introduce the notion of the political responsibility of ministers, a concept that had developed in the English parliamentary system as a means to reinforce the union between the executive and the legislative and as a substitute for the royal prerogative. At the same time, her salon temporarily formed a coalition of centrists between constitutional monarchists and moderate republicans supporting Narbonne. By so doing, she demonstrated a much more pragmatic view of political institutions than other constitutional monarchists. In short, according to her, the common feature of constitutional monarchy and conservative republic consisted of the guarantee of rights.

By the summer of 1793, Mme de Staël’s political stance became ambiguous. The analysis of her *Réflexions sur le procès de la reine* revealed that she was above all opposed to the prospect of the counter-revolution. Although she openly declared that she was a constitutional monarchist

and did not give up hope of restoration until November 1793, she also accepted the Republic by sanctioning republican virtue. After a short flirtation with the Republic, Mme de Staël became a constitutional monarchist again in 1813 and republished her *Réflexions sur le procès de la reine* when the Bourbons were restored in 1814.

Mme de Staël's judgement of constitutional monarchy of 1789 was to change radically after 1793. The change in her appraisal of constitutional monarchy influenced her judgement of the constitution of 1791 over time. This article has demonstrated that she extended her efforts to preserve the integrity of the constitution of 1791 until the advent of the republic in August 1792. Nevertheless, in *Considérations sur la Révolution française* in 1817, she condemned the constitution of 1791 as the ultimate cause of the Terror because it was characterised by the absolute single chamber and a lack of any checking mechanism.

Finally, Mme de Staël's changing view of constitutional monarchy correlated with her successive judgements of Necker's role in the French Revolution. In 1791, she linked Necker to the populist vision of the French Revolution and declared that he provoked the French Revolution. She discreetly retracted this view in the summer of 1793 when she wrote that the queen, by her nomination of the archevêque of Sens, incited the French Revolution. Finally, in *Considérations*, she considered that the French Revolution would not have taken place had the French listened to Necker in June 1789, and that the unique valid phase of the French Revolution from the point of view of liberty was prior to the taking of Bastille, during which time Necker proposed a political reform characterised by the institutionalisation of two chambers, the second chamber composed of aristocrats.

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- 1 She published 'A quels signes peut-on reconnaître l'opinion de la majorité ?' in *Indépendant* in April 1790. Her 'l'Eloge de Guibert' was inserted into *Correspondance littéraire* of Grimm, XVI, 66, in August 1790.
 - 2 He published *Qu'est-ce que le Tiers-Etat?* in January, 1789.
 - 3 Rosanvallon, P., 'Physiocrates', in *Dictionnaire critique, Idées*, p.365.
 - 4 Matsumoto, R., *Kindai Kokka to Kindai Kakumei no seiji shiso*, (Tokyo, 1997).
 - 5 Morris (gouverneur), *Journal de gouverneur Morris pendant les années 1789 à 1792*, (Paris, 1901), p.204.
 - 6 After being dismissed in July 1789, Necker became finance minister for a third time between July 1789 and September 1790. About the climate of Mme de Staël's salon and her devotion to the cause of her father, Morris, *Journal*.
 - 7 Baecque, A.de, *Le corps de l'histoire: métaphores et politique, 1770-1800*, (Paris, 1993).
 - 8 Grange, *Idées de Necker*, p.401.
 - 9 *Monarchiens* were advocates of the bicameral legislature inherent in English political institutions. They

tried to gain the support of liberal aristocrats such as Montlosier who were partisans of the bicameral legislature in the summer of 1789. However, their political tie-up failed and they soon became marginalised in the Revolutionary politics. Furet, F. and Ozouf, M.(eds.), *Terminer la Révolution; Mounier et Barnave dans la Révolution française*, (Grenoble, 1990).

- 10 Grange, *Idées de Necker*, p.416-421.
- 11 Ibid., pp.421-422.
- 12 Ibid., p.423.
- 13 Mme de Staël, *Correspondance générale*, 1-II, p.328.
- 14 Contemporaries called les *Triumvirs*, a trio composed of Barnave, Duport and Lameth, A. de. They symbolised the new generation of Revolutionaries. Duport was the author of the decree of the August 11.
- 15 *Remerciements de J.-J.Rousseau à Mme la Baronne de Staël. Remis à leur adresse par.....Courrier extraordinaire pour le trimestre du Printemps*, (Paris, 1789), p.1.
- 16 Ibid., p.1.
- 17 Ibid., p.3.
- 18 Ibid., p.3.
- 19 Ibid., p.6, p.8.
- 20 Godet, P.(ed.), 'Madame de Charrière et Jean-Jacques Rousseau', *Madame de Charrière et ses amis (1740-1805)*, tome I, p.417-440.
- 21 Ibid., pp.422-423.
- 22 Champcenetz, L.-P., *Petit traité de l'amour des femmes pour les sots*, (Bagatelle, 1788).
- 23 Ibid. p.19.
- 24 Champcenetz, L.-P., *Réponse aux lettres sur le caractère et les ouvrages de J.-J.Rousseau*, Bagatelle que vingt librairies ont refusé de faire imprimer, (Geneva, 1789), p.4.
- 25 Ibid., p.38.
- 26 Ibid., p.46.
- 27 Godet, *Madame de Charrière*, p.440. Mme de Charrière lived in Switzerland.
- 28 Mme de Staël, 'l'Eloge de M.de Guibert', in *Œuvres complètes de Madame de Staël*, vol.III, (Geneva, 1967), p.414.
- 29 Ibid., p.422.
- 30 Rivarol, *Petit dictionnaire des grands hommes de la révolution*, (Paris, 1986), p.29.
- 31 Ibid., p.30.
- 32 Ibid., p.30.
- 33 Mme de Staël, *Correspondance générale*, 1-II, p.370.
- 34 Mme de Staël, *Correspondance générale*, 2-II, p.412.
- 35 Garet, D.J., *Mémoires historiques sur la vie de M.Suard, sur ses écrits et sur le XVIII siècle, etc.* (Paris,

- 1820).
- 36 Mme de Staël, 'A quels signes', *Oeuvres complètes*, (Paris, 1820-21), vol.XVII, p.324.
 - 37 Ibid., p.326.
 - 38 Ibid., p.329.
 - 39 Ibid., p.323.
 - 40 Ibid., p.422.
 - 41 'Il existe...une masse dans la nation, toujours inerte toujours inamobile qui, dans les temps de trouble, n'a d'autre soin que de connaître le parti le plus fort afin de s'y rallier. Cette masse....pèse à la longue dans un même sens et du moment qu'il y a du calme, que tout danger est passé, murmure tout bas une sorte d'opinion publique.' Mme de Staël, *Circonstances actuelles*, pp.106-107.
 - 42 Mme de Staël wrote this pamphlet to justify Necker's third administration. It was published anonymously on May 10. Balayé, S., 'Un ouvrage inconnu.'
 - 43 Mme de Staël wrote: 'mon père est passablement effrayé mais je le crois utile.' Mme de Staël, *Correspondance générale*, 1-II, p.437.
 - 44 Balayé, 'Un ouvrage inconnu', p.27.
 - 45 La Fayette, *Mémoire, correspondance et manuscrits du général la Fayette*, (Paris, 1837-1838), vol. III, p.96. On the ideological implication of the Republic during constitutional monarchy, Gueniffey, P., 'Cordeliers and Girondins: the prehistory of the republic?', in *The invention of the modern republic*, Fontana, B. (ed.), (Cambridge, 1994).
 - 46 Mme de Staël, *Circonstances actuelles*, p.156.
 - 47 Michon, G., *Essai sur l'histoire du parti feuillant. Adrien Duport, thèse pour le doctorat ès lettres*, (Paris, 1924), p.245.
 - 48 Ibid., p.252.
 - 49 Ibid., p.296.
 - 50 Ibid., pp.296-7.
 - 51 Halévi, R., 'La république monarchique', in *Le Siècle de l'avènement républicain*, Furet, F. and Ozouf, M.(eds.), (Paris, 1993).
 - 52 Mme de Staël, *Correspondance générale*, 1-II, p.493.
 - 53 Montesquieu, *De l'Esprit des lois*, livre XI, chapitre 4, pp.162-163.
 - 54 See p.58 of this chapter.
 - 55 Michon, G., *Le rôle de la presse dans les derniers mois de 1791 et au début de 1792*, (Paris, 1941), p.6.
 - 56 Ibid., p.30.
 - 57 Ibid., p.43.
 - 58 Ibid., pp.34-35.
 - 59 Mme de Staël, *Correspondance générale*, 1-II, pp.523-524.

- 60 Dard, E., *Un confidant de l'empereur: le comte de Narbonne. 1755-1813*, (Paris, 1943), pp.523-524.
- 61 Laquière, A., 'Le modèle anglais et la responsabilité ministérielle selon le groupe de Coppel' in Jaume, L., *Coppel, creuset de l'esprit libéral*, (Paris, 2000).
- 62 Mme de Staël, *Correspondance générale*, 2-II, p.328.
- 63 Roederer, P.L., 'Rapport de M.Narbonne, ministre de la guerre au roi, lu au conseil du roi le 24 février 1792', in *Œuvres du comte P.L.Roederer*, vol.III, Paris,1853-859,p.253.
- 64 Mme de Staël, *Correspondance générale*, 2-I, pp.330-331.
- 65 Ibid., p.332.
- 66 Ibid.,pp.332-333.
- 67 Laquière, 'Le modèle anglais', p.164.
- 68 Ibid., p.157-158.
- 69 Ibid., p.159.
- 70 Ibid., p.168.
- 71 Conches, F.de, *Louis XVI, Marie-Antoinette et Mme Elisabeth*, t.I, pp.124-127.
- 72 Glagau, H., *Die französische Legislative und der Ursprung der Revolutionskriege, 1791-1792*, mit einem Anhang Politischer Briefe aus dem Wiener k.und k. Haus-, Hof- und Statsarchiv, von Hans Glagau, (1896).
- 73 Lacretelle jeune, *Histoire de la Révolution française*, vol.III, pp.31-32.
- 74 Citation from Gwynne, G.E., *Madame de Staël et la Révolution française, politique, philosophie, littérature*, (Paris, 1969), pp.18-19.
- 75 Dard, *Confidant*, p.106.
- 76 Michot, *Duport*, pp.387-398.
- 77 Kelly, L., *Juniper hall: an English refuge from the French Revolution*, (London, 1991).
- 78 Mme de Staël, 'Défense de la reine', *Œuvres complètes*, (Geneva, 1967), vol.1, p.26.
- 79 Ibid., p.26.
- 80 Ibid., p.29.
- 81 Ibid., p.29.
- 82 Ibid., p.32.
- 83 Ibid., p.24.
- 84 Broglie,V.de, 'Lettres de M. de Talleyrand à Madame de Staël', in *Revue d'histoire diplomatique*, 1890, no.1, p.82.
- 85 Ibid., p.83.
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スタール夫人と立憲君主制

武 田 千 夏

スタール夫人は1789年から1793年そして1815年以後の王政復古時代に立憲君主制を支持した。しかしながらこれらの二つの時期に彼女が支持した政治政体は似てるようで非なるものだった。本論文では主に1789年から1793年に焦点をあて、政治活動を通じて、彼女の目指した立憲君主制のイメージを抽出した。彼女は当初1791年憲法を支持し、ネッケルがフランス革命を引き起こした、と主張した。そして父の政治的失脚後にも、責任内閣制などを含むイギリスの議会制度を革命フランスに樹立させるよう努力した。しかしながら1793年以後フランス革命が急進化するに及んで、彼女は立憲君主制とフランス革命を切り離して考えるようになっていった。王政復古期に出版された『フランス革命についての考察』では、スタール夫人は、1789年6月に国王がネッケルの提案を受け入れていればフランス革命が勃発することはなかった、とすら主張した。